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SUBJECT: FINLAND: 2009-2010 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT - PART I

REF: STATE 97228

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I. Summary

Finland is not a significant narcotics-producing or trafficking country. Drug use and drug-related crime rates have been mixed over the past four years, although there was significant increase in only one of the classes of narcotics seized in 2008 - pharmaceutical preparations classified as narcotics. Finnish officials describe the situation as generally stable. Finland's constitution places a strong emphasis on the protection of civil liberties and this sometimes adversely impacts law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute drug-related crime. The use of electronic surveillance under the Finnish Coercive Measures Act, such as wiretapping, is generally permitted in serious narcotics investigations. The police may carry out a simplified pre-trial investigation in cases where the statutory punishment for the offence/s is restricted to a fine or maximum of six months imprisonment (e.g. unlawful use of narcotics). In a simplified pre-trial investigation the questioning and other aspects of the investigation can often be performed at the place that the offence was committed in order to target investigation resources towards more serious offences. Finnish political culture tends to favor the allocation of resources to demand reduction and rehabilitation efforts over strategies aimed at reducing supply. Finnish law enforcement believes that increased drug use in Finland may be attributable to the wider availability of narcotics within the European Union, increased experimentation by Finnish youth and cultural de-stigmatization of narcotics use.

While there is some overland narcotics trafficking across the Russian border, Finnish law enforcement believes that existing border controls are largely effective in preventing this route from becoming a major trafficking conduit into Finland. Estonian and Russian organized crime syndicates, and to a lesser degree, syndicates from other Baltic countries, are believed responsible for most narcotics trafficking into Finland. Estonia's accession to the Schengen Treaty has complicated law enforcement efforts to combat narcotics trafficking through the reduction in border checks of the nearly 5.8 million annual travelers and 900,000 cars, which transit between Helsinki and Tallinn. Early indications that increased numbers of direct flights to Asia would result in Asian criminal syndicates becoming more involved with the Finnish drug trade have not played out.

Finland is a major donor to the UNDCP and is active in counternarcotics efforts within the EU. It is a party

to the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Finland maintains strong law enforcement and customs relationships with its Baltic neighbors, the European Union and Russia - these close ties have been very helpful in combating the production and trafficking of narcotics in the region.

II. Status of Country

Narcotics production, cultivation, and the production of precursor chemicals in Finland are very modest in scope. Most drugs that are consumed in Finland are produced elsewhere, and Finland is not a source country for the export of narcotics. Estonia, Russia and Spain are Finland's principal sources for illicit drugs, with Spain representing the origin point within the EU for most cocaine entering Finland. Finnish law criminalizes the distribution, sale and transport of narcotics; the Government of Finland cooperates with other countries and international law enforcement organizations regarding extradition and precursor chemical control.

The overall incidence of drug use in Finland remains low (relative to many other western countries); however, drug use has increased over the past decade. The number of different persons suspected of narcotics offenses in 2008 was 4,543, which represented 8.6 percent of the 5.2 million person population. Cocaine is rare, but marijuana, khat, amphetamines, methamphetamine, synthetic club drugs, Ecstasy, LSD, and heroin and heroin-substitutes can be found. Finland has historically had one of Europe's lowest cannabis-use rates. Cannabis seizures have been mixed since 2003, with total numbers of seizures in several

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areas increasing, yet with total quantities of cannabis seized having decreased. In 2008, the Finnish authorities seized 56 kg of Marijuana and 41 kg of cannabis plants. Ecstasy, GHB, Ketamine (Vitamin K) and other MDMA-type drugs are concentrated among young people and associated with the club culture in Helsinki and other large cities. Social Welfare authorities believe the introduction of GHB and other date rape drugs into Finland has led to an increase in sexual assaults. Changing social and cultural attitudes towards the acceptance of limited drug use also contribute to this phenomenon.

Heroin use began to increase in Finland in the late 1990s, but seizures have continued to decline since 2003. The quantity of seized heroin has remained small for several years. With the exception of a 51.7 kg seizure of heroin in 2005, seizures have never been larger than (and consistently smaller than) 1.6 kg since 2003. Typically, heroin is smuggled by ethnic groups residing in Scandinavia using vehicles. They pass by way of Germany and Denmark to the rest of Scandinavia.

Abuse of Subutex (buprenorphine) and other heroin-substitutes seems to have replaced heroin abuse to a significant extent. Finnish officials note that Finland is one of few countries reporting that people become addicted from Subutex use. Possession of Subutex is legal in Finland with a doctor's prescription, but Finnish physicians do not readily write prescriptions for Subutex unless patients are actually in a supervised withdrawal program. Finnish couriers do obtain Subutex from other EU countries, however. A major change occurred at the end of 2007 when the Baltic countries joined the Schengen area. This means that a person who resides principally in Finland is no longer allowed to import Subutex prescribed elsewhere. Finnish officials have not seen

a significant move to heroin now that Subutex is not as readily available from the Baltic countries. The size of Subutex seizures by the Finnish customs has remained consistent over the last five years.

Finnish Customs recorded 94 firearm violations, approximately the same amount as in the previous reporting period. There was a total of 125 weapons seized in connection with these violations, with 14 being firearms and 111 being gas-spray guns.

According to Finnish law enforcement, the number of organized crime groups has grown slightly in the past few years, and so has the number of their members; in the end of 2008 there were 88 organized crime groups with some 1,200 persons. The number of crime organizations that meet the EU criterion was 36. Most Finnish syndicates have international contacts, particularly with crime groups operating in Russia or the Baltic countries.

Since Estonia's entry into the Schengen Treaty, Estonian travelers to Finland are no longer subject to routine customs inspection at ports-of-entry, making it difficult to intercept narcotics. Although Estonian syndicates control the operations, many of the domestic street-level dealers are Finns. Estonian smugglers also organize the shipment of Moroccan cannabis from Southern Spain to Finland. Again, overall amounts are small. Finnish law enforcement reports that cooperation with Estonian law enforcement is excellent. Finnish law enforcement appears well prepared to address the potential use by Asian crime groups of new air routes from Helsinki to major Asian cities like Bangkok, Beijing and New Delhi. In 2000, Finland had 4 non-stop flights per week between Finland and Asia. In 2008, Finnair has 11 non-stop flights per day to Asia. To reduce the likelihood of Asian syndicates' exploiting such routes, Finnish law enforcement has established close cooperation with airline officials and Asian law enforcement to coordinate interdiction efforts, including the posting of liaison personnel in Beijing and Guangzhou.

III. Country Actions against Drugs

Policy Initiatives. Finland's comprehensive 1998 policy statement on illegal drugs articulates a zero-tolerance policy regarding narcotics. Finnish comprehensive drug policy is based on general public policy measures, national legislation and international agreements. A Government Resolution on co-operation in

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drug policy that runs from 2008 to 2011 defines an overall plan to guide the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health preventing drug use and distribution. In accordance with the Government Resolution, a new Narcotics Act was adopted by Parliament in 2008. The Act brings the Finnish drug legislation in conformity with the current EU provisions. However, a 2001 law created a system of fines for simple possession offenses rather than jail time. The fine system enjoys widespread popular support and is chiefly used to punish youth found in possession of small quantities of marijuana, hashish, or Ecstasy. There is limited political and public support for stronger punitive measures.

Finnish officials state that new instruments available in international cooperation, such as joint investigation teams and the rapid exchange of information available now that Finland is a signatory of the Prum Convention, will support the fight against the crime at national level.

The present legislation provides for use of wiretapping only in those cases which would result in a prison sentence (such as homicide, espionage, aggravated sexual abuse and aggravated narcotic crime). A bill went before Parliament in 2009 that attempted to expand the use of wiretapping in criminal investigations but it was eventually voted down. The proposal would have also allowed wiretapping in specific criminal cases followed by a pecuniary penalty.

Finland has a streamlined system that allows it to categorize new designer drugs as illegal narcotics within two to three months. Law enforcement is still concerned with the ability of manufacturers to slightly modify existing narcotics to make them not technically illegal under the law. The authorities are frustrated with the 12-24 months that the E.U. and the U.N. can take to make new designer drugs illegal.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Finnish law enforcement continued to effectively investigate and prosecute instances of narcotics possession, distribution and trafficking. Within Finland, the Finnish Police and Customs have primary responsibility for interdicting and investigating narcotics trafficking and distribution (the Border Guards, who primarily interdict narcotics during immigration checks, can conduct investigations and since 2005 their authority was expanded to cover all of Finland). Within the police, the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) is charged with coordinating organized crime investigations, as well as serving as the Finnish focal point for international law enforcement cooperation. The police, as well as the Finnish Border Guards, fall under the Finnish Ministry of the Interior. Customs falls under the Finnish Ministry of Finance, and also maintains responsibility for coordination of Finnish customs narcotics interdiction efforts with other nations' customs services. Finnish judicial authorities are empowered to seize assets, real and financial, of criminals.

Finnish law enforcement has effectively prioritized narcotics cases through Joint Intelligence Teams and Centers, which comprise representatives of the police, Customs and Border Guards. These centers are located at the national, provincial and local levels, where a broad range of intelligence and analysis capabilities are brought to bear in identifying priority narcotics investigations. For instance, the center responsible for Helsinki includes representatives from the NBI, Helsinki police, Customs, Border Guards, prison authorities and provincial police representatives. The reformulation of joint Teams and Centers was initiated in 2008 in order to enhance the criminal investigation process. In addition to organizational changes, a new national level situation center operating alongside the joint Teams and Centers will provide up-to-date information and situation monitoring for law enforcement organs.

Additionally to the branch-specific training modules within the Police, Customs and Border Guard organizations, the personnel operating at the joint Teams and Centers were provided a collective course of crime analysis at the Police College in fall 2008. In 2007, the Finnish law enforcement community received additional government funding to pursue a number of interagency, target-oriented narcotics investigations,

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including the assignment of prosecutors to an investigation from its inception. The result of this additional funding has been positive, allowing authorities to target transnational organized crime syndicates attempting to import drugs to Finland.

In 2006 Finnish Customs deployed a mobile X-ray scanning facility at Helsinki's Western Harbor to provide Customs with the ability to conduct scanning of incoming trucks and containers. In 2007, Customs employed two such scanning devices and had one permanent scanning facility placed at Vaalimaa, which is the primary border-crossing between Finland and Russia. More than 25,000 cargo units were scanned by the Finnish Customs during 2007. Additionally, Customs has enhanced its use of narcotics detection canine units at key ports of entry into Finland. While these resources have yielded limited narcotics seizures, the authorities feel that they serve a strong deterrent function.

The 2008 Police report on narcotics offenses and seizures is the latest available. In 2008, Finland experienced a 1 percent increase in the number of drug offenses and a 10 percent decrease in the number of aggravated narcotics offenses. 9,933 of the 16,530 offenses reported for 2008 were related to narcotics use; the number of aggravated narcotics offenses was 1,869. Evidence of the limited cannabis market comes from the Customs figures for 2008 which show seizures totaling 56 kg of marijuana. In 2008, 25 percent of the suspects of aggravated narcotics offenses were foreigners; of those, 40 percent were Estonian and 21 percent were Russian.

Authorities estimate that the use of cocaine has increased in Finland and in the other EU countries. While overall amounts of cocaine entering Finland remain extremely low, Finnish law enforcement believes the importation of cocaine will continue to increase. Finnish authorities have asserted that cocaine predominantly enters Finland from Spain and that Finnish motorcycle gangs play a significant role in the supply chain. 3 kg of cocaine were seized in 2008, down from 4 kg in 2007.

Cocaine has not threatened the position of cannabis, amphetamine or Subutex among the most popular drugs. Finnish authorities have noted an increase in the number and quantity of steroid seizures on the Finnish market, from 111,000 and 116,000 tablets/ampoules seized in 2004 and 2005, respectively to 200,000 and 192,000 seized in 2006 and 2007.

One potentially worrying trend is that the few smuggling enterprises that do exist are becoming increasingly sophisticated. For instance, consignments of amphetamine have been hidden in trucks, and subsequently buried in remote, locations. The locations are then mapped and sold to criminals in Estonia handling the retail trade in Finland. To counter schemes of this type, the Finnish police are increasingly dependent on cooperation with their Estonian counterparts' cooperation they describe as outstanding. It is now estimated that 90 percent of amphetamine is imported to Finland from or through Estonia. Finnish law enforcement believes that significant quantities of the amphetamine on the Finnish market are produced in Lithuania by Lithuanian crime groups. According to Finnish law enforcement, Estonian and Lithuanian organized crime groups appear to be working in close cooperation in trafficking amphetamine into Finland.

According to Customs officials, there has been an increase in the number of Subutex couriers departing Finland on a regular basis to Estonia and Latvia. However, as the couriers possess valid Subutex prescriptions, Customs authorities are prevented from seizing these legal prescriptions. Suspected courier travel has increased annually for the past few years. From December 21, 2007, changes in EU regulations prevent Latvian and Estonian pharmacies from filling

Subutex prescriptions for Finnish citizens. However, Finnish couriers are likely attempting to identify other EU sources for Subutex, including France.

Finland continued its impressive record on multilateral law enforcement, working through, among other organizations, EUROPOL, INTERPOL and the Baltic Sea Region Task Force on organized crime. Finland

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maintains thirteen liaison officers in ten cities, (Finland's reach extends to 36 countries if one includes Finland's participation in the Nordic liaison network). Along with great cooperation with Estonian authorities, Finnish authorities report very good cooperation with Russian authorities. Finnish law enforcement personnel continue to conduct criminal narcotics investigations involving Finland abroad, including the investigation of suspects beyond Finland's borders.

Several international joint operations were launched during the reporting period, aimed at uncovering connections between organized crime groups, trafficking of drugs, illegal medicines and other substitutes, money laundering, forgeries and cargo surveillance. Five out of total eleven operations initiated in 2008 were EU related, two were coordinated by the European Anti-Fraud Office and four operations were transnational. Besides European and Finland's neighboring countries, the cooperating partners included countries from Asia (China, India, Thailand), South and North America (Argentina, Chile, Peru and U.S.) and Africa (Algeria, Tunis, Morocco).

Corruption. As a matter of government policy, Finland does not encourage or facilitate illicit production or distribution of narcotic or psychotropic drugs or other controlled substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Finnish officials do not engage in, facilitate, or encourage the illicit production or distribution of such drugs or substances, or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions. Official corruption is extremely rare in Finland. There have been no arrests or prosecutions of public officials charged with corruption or related offenses linked to narcotics in Finnish history.

Agreements and Treaties. Finland is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Finland is also a party to the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Finland is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols on trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling and the UN Convention against Corruption. A 1976 bilateral extradition treaty is in force between the United States and Finland. Finland signed the bilateral instrument of the EU-U.S. Extradition Treaty in 2004; Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee approved the Treaty in mid-2007, and the Finnish Parliament unanimously approved the Treaty in December 2007. Finland has also concluded a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement with the United States. Finland is a member of the major Donors' Group within the Committee on Narcotic Drugs. The vast majority of Finland's financial and other assistance to drug-producing and transit countries has been via the UNODC. The Treaty of Prum, which addresses cross-border cooperation (including information exchange) in combating crime and terrorism, took effect in Finland in June 2007.

Cultivation/Production. There were no reported seizures of indigenously cultivated opium, no recorded diversion of precursor chemicals and no detection of illicit methamphetamine, cocaine, or LSD laboratories

in Finland in 2007. Finland's climate makes cultivation of cannabis and opium poppy almost impossible. Local cannabis cultivation, while described by authorities as increasing is nevertheless believed to be limited to small-scale, indoor hydroponic culture for individual use not sale. Authorities see the main reason for the increase in personal home cultivation as being mainly due to the ease of obtaining the specialized equipment over the internet.

Seizures by weight of cannabis plants have fluctuated over the past several years with 2008 seeing seizures of 41 kg, a 47 percent decrease from 2007. The other side of this statistic is that the number of plants seized increased dramatically, from 7600 plants in 2007 to 14000 plants in 2008. The majority of cultivation cases were very small, with an average of 1 to 20 plants per seizure. The distribution of 22 precursor chemicals listed by international agencies is tightly controlled.

Drug Flow/Transit. Medical narcotics (including Subutex), amphetamine and methamphetamine represent the majority of police seizures in Finland. Finland is not

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a major transit country for narcotics. Most drugs trafficked into Finland originate or pass through Estonia. Finnish authorities report that their land border with Russia is well guarded on both sides to ensure that it does not become a major transit route.

Domestic Programs/Demand Reduction. According to the Development Center for Social Affairs and Health, there are approximately 20,000 registered drug users in Finland, with some 10,000 undergoing treatment. Despite these low numbers, the Ministry of Health and Social Services has stated that the Government must do more to reduce demand. The central government gives substantial autonomy to regional and municipal governments to address demand reduction using general revenue grants, and often relies upon the efforts of Finnish NGOs. Finnish schools continued to educate students about the dangers of drugs. Finland's national public health service offered rehabilitation services to users and addicts. Such programs typically use a holistic approach that emphasizes social and economic reintegration into society and is not solely focused on eliminating the subject's use and abuse of illegal drugs. The government has been criticized for its failure to provide adequate access to rehabilitation programs for prison inmates. An additional challenge in Finland in terms of treatment is that there is no substitute treatment for amphetamine in Finland.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

Policy Initiatives and Bilateral Cooperation. The U.S. has worked with Finland and the other Nordic countries through multilateral organizations in an effort to combat narcotics trafficking in the Nordic-Baltic region. This work has involved U.S. assistance to and cooperation with the Baltic countries and Russia.

The Road Ahead. The U.S. anticipates continued close cooperation with Finland in the fight against narcotics. Finnish law enforcement is expected to maintain its willingness to work with relevant U.S. law enforcement agencies, and is well positioned to exchange law enforcement information and collaboratively pursue narcotics traffickers and international organized criminal entities involved in the manufacture and distribution of narcotics

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